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This book analyzes the changes in kinship relations in Quỳnh Đôi village in northern Vietnam during the present era of economic reform, in comparison with the pre-socialist/colonial period and the socialist transformation period, against the background of economic, political, social and cultural changes. Within the village setting the author does not take kinship structures for granted but shows how individuals use kinship as a foundation to secure benefits from collective arrangements in everyday life. Using a social capital approach the author argues that the importance of kinship has increased recently but that its forms and functions changed, which could be shown by studying kinship both. Tracing the changes of kinship relations in the three periods from the perspective of patrilineage membership and of ego-based kin networks, the author shows that ego-based kin networks create social capital beyond the patrilineage, profoundly affecting the gender position and opportunities of women in village Vietnam.

The author was born near the research site and is currently a lecturer of sociology at Vietnam National University in Hanoi.

Cover illustration: Performing ancestor worship in 2006 spring ancestor worship at the Cù patrilineage hall, Quỳnh Đôi village. Photo taken by Nguyễn Tuấn Anh

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